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[Inclosure.]

The plague situation in Egypt.

MARSEILLES, July 6, 1899.

The plague situation in Alexandria, Egypt, is now such that rigid quarantine measures against importations from that city have been adopted at about every important Mediterranean port except Marseilles. In this city ships arriving from Alexandria are at present subjected to inspection and disinfection as described in a recent report to the Department of State. The state of affairs in Alexandria is thus made clear in a letter to the Semaphore, the commercial authority of Marseilles, bearing date of June 26, since which time daily reports of cases and deaths have been made.

The epidemic neither increases nor diminishes. One or two new cases are reported almost daily with occasional intervals when none are reported. A fact worthy of remark since the outbreak of the plague is that the disease does not seem to be propagated by direct contact. There is no record of repeated cases in the same house. Immediately upon the sending to the hospital of individuals suspected to have the plague, all those who have been allowed to approach them, and especially those who have inhabited the same houses, are sent to a lazaretto outside the city. It seems inexplicable that no suspected case has broken out among those who are known to have been in direct contact with individuals now down with the disease.

The malady seems to attack certain classes of persons. Until now almost as many Greeks as natives have been taken with it. At the most, one or two wives of natives have been attacked. As to the Greeks, most of the cases are young children of thirteen to fourteen years of age, grocers' delivering boys usually and never more than thirty years of age. This seems most extraordinary. The hypothesis that the disease has been carried by comestibles seems most unlikely because cases of plague have occurred among those who certainly did not use products bought of the grocers.

In a total of about 20 cases among the natives about 10 police guards are included who took the contagion in the houses first infected. The others now sick are scattered in all quarters of the city between which no correlation seems to exist. Considerations such as the foregoing create in some minds doubt as to whether the malady now prevailing is the plague.

The municipality and the sanitary service of the city display tireless zeal in the present situation. Measures of prevention have been taken on every hand. The city is divided into quarters, and at the head of each are 2 physicians. Visits are made to homes of natives, and invalids suspected are immediately removed to the hospitals and the most minute precautions are then taken to prevent the spread of disease from the suspected habitation. As I have explained, all those who have been in contact with the suspect are sent to a lazaretto.

In order that too great hardship may not be imposed, all persons put into quarantine and thus prevented from working are paid a small sum daily. By this course families of suspects are kept in a state of contentment.

A premium of 2 francs (38 cents) is given to any individual who will inform the authorities of cases of plague, and a premium of 1 franc (19 cents) is offered for the head of every rat dead of the plague. Until the present, nobody has claimed this last premium. The prize is too small to attract men who might take the consequences of coming into contact with the disease. Although the natives are sceptical as to the contraction of disease from rats, they are not courageous enough to run the risk of danger.

ROBERT P. SKINNER,
United States Consul.

ITALY.

Report from Naples.

NAPLES, ITALY, July 5, 1899.

SIR: I have the honor to report that a supplemental bill of health was issued to the steamship *Karamania*, of the Anchor Line, on July 3, bound for New York.

There were examined 180 emigrants and their baggage: Trachoma, 4 cases; cardiac disease, 2 cases; scrofula, 1 case; measles, 1 case.

The steamship company was only advised not to send these cases, with the result that all were refused passage. There sailed, then, 172 emigrants from this port.

The inspection is now done in the same manner as outlined in my report of last week, with the exceptions which are mentioned in the letter which I have sent to all the steamship companies, and of which I inclose a copy.

On attempting to assume my duties here, on my arrival, I was informed by the captain of the port that he only had authority from his Government to permit me in the Government building in the event of there being infected districts in Italy, and since there were no such districts, he could see no reason for my presence. The matter was at once referred to the consul-general at Rome; he referred it to the embassy, and they seemed to think that the matter must go to the State Department for instructions, but in the meantime the captain of the port communicated with his Government with the result that I now hold a permit to be present at all inspections. Thus the matter which threatened to be a serious inconvenience has now been settled.

Respectfully, yours,

VICTOR G. HEISER,
Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

[Inclosure.]

NAPLES, ITALY, July 5, 1899.

SIR: After this date the following changes will be inaugurated:

There will be no fees charged for the medical inspection of alien emigrants and their baggage bound for the United States, but in order to facilitate the departure of ships you will be permitted to furnish men for the baggage inspection, subject to the direction of the medical inspector.

Passengers' baggage will be inspected before sunset as late as practicable on the day of sailing.

All inspection cards must be in the possession of the emigrants at the time of the medical inspection, in order to receive the consular stamps.

All wearing apparel which has been ordered for disinfection shall be subjected to steam at the temperature of 101 to 102° C. for a period of not less than thirty minutes after such temperature has been reached.

Respectfully, yours,

VICTOR G. HEISER,
Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

JAPAN.

Disinfection of steamship America Maru at Yokohama.

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN, June 30, 1899.

SIR: Referring to my letter of June 28, I have the honor to report that the steamship *America Maru* was this afternoon liberated by the Japanese authorities from quarantine, having completed a term of six days only from the completion of her disinfection, instead of full seven days as required by their own law. I do not understand the reason of this action.

I visited the ship prior to her liberation, and have to report that, so far as I can ascertain, the process of disinfection of passengers, crew, baggage, and bedding was thoroughly performed. But, for want of proper appliances, the disinfection of the quarters, which was made by simple washing with acid carbolic, leaves much to be desired. I am informed that the Government contemplates building some tugs, fitted with necessary apparatus, for use in the disinfection of the ships themselves. How soon this will be done, however, remains to be seen.

Respectfully, yours,

STUART ELDRIDGE, M. D.,
Sanitary Inspector, U. S. M. H. S.

The SUPERVISING SURGEON-GENERAL,
U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.